DREAMS OF THE BLIND

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Dreams of the Blind

CURIOUS data have been gathered abroad with reference to the dreams of the blind.

It appears that all dreams of normal persons are sight dreams and that a dream is spoken of as a vision. If the blind have not been born so, it is said they may remember enough of what they have seen to enable them to imagine how things look, and, when the imagination has free play in sleep, to picture themselves as in full possession of the sense of sight.

Physiologists would explain this by saying that during the years in which the subjects possessed the sense of sight a certain part of the brain had become educated to receive and interpret all these messages which the eye sends, and that when this part of the brain acts spontaneously in sleep the person dreams of seeing.

Of some two hundred blind persons of both sexes who were questioned it was found that those who became blind before their fifth year never dreamed of seeing. Of those whose sight was lost between the fifth and the seventh year some did and some did not see in their dreams, while all whose eyesight was lost after the seventh year had quite as vivid dream visions as normally endowed persons.

The fifth to the seventh year is thus shown to be the critical period. This period corresponds with the age which authorities assign as the limit at which a child becoming deaf will also become dumb, and also with the age of one's earliest continuous memory of oneself.

It is interesting to note that blind persons dream quite as frequently as normal people and that, with those who do not see in their dreams, hearing plays the principal part. When dreaming of home, for instance, they will hear the voices of relatives and perhaps will feel the familiar objects in the household.

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